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INDONESIA/EAST TIMOR - AI APPALLED AT MASSACRE
CALLS FOR IMPARTIAL INQUIRY

Amnesty International today (14 November 1991) urged the Indonesian government to ensure the promised investigation into the graveside massacre of around 100 people in East Timor on Tuesday ends in justice.

"This killing is appalling, and what's worse, it is just the latest in 15 years of outrages in East Timor," said Amnesty International. "We are hoping now for a serious investigation into the incident - not just empty rhetoric."

To date, no thorough investigation into human rights violations has ever been undertaken by the Indonesian government in East Timor, which was annexed by Indonesia in 1975. Amnesty International's repeated requests for permission to visit the territory have always been refused by the government and the organization continues to have serious concerns about human rights there.

"We want to see a full impartial investigation, preferably one conducted by authorities from outside Indonesia," said Amnesty International. "It is time the international community took stock of what is happening in East Timor, and shouldered some of its responsibility for bringing these human rights violations to an end."

Military authorities said at first that not more than 100 people were killed and about 40 injured when soldiers opened fire on mourners at Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili, East Timor's capital. Later they acknowledged only 19 deaths. As well as those killed, eyewitnesses said scores were seriously wounded. An investigation into the massacre has been promised.

Amnesty International is pressing for the investigation to be started immediately. "We believe the government must demonstrate its commitment to this investigation," said Amnesty International. "One way would be to invite in the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Summary or Arbitrary Executions to observe." The Dili massacre comes in the wake of the

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cancellation of a visit by a Portuguese parliamentary delegation, which had been arranged through negotiations facilitated by the UN Secretary General.

Scores of people are believed to have been arrested in connection with the incident and Amnesty International is seriously concerned for their safety. The organization is urging that those detained solely for their non-violent political activities or beliefs be immediately released and that, following their release, their safety be guaranteed. It is also calling on the Indonesian authorities to ensure that those responsible for extrajudicial executions or for the ill-treatment of prisoners be brought promptly to justice.

Those killed and wounded were among hundreds of people who had gone to the grave of Sebastiao (Gomes) Rangel, a young man killed on 28 October when Indonesian troops entered the parish church of Motael where he and about 20 other political activists had been hiding.

According to eyewitnesses, the mourners had attended a memorial mass for Sebastiao (Gomes) Rangel at about 7:00 am before walking to the Santa Cruz cemetery where he was buried. At the cemetery, security forces reportedly opened fire on the mourners, leaving many dead. Eyewitnesses said that some members of the group had shouted pro-independence slogans and a flag of the nationalist organization Fretilin could be seen, but that otherwise the procession was peaceful.

Amnesty International's concerns in East Timor include persistent reports of extrajudicial executions by Indonesian security forces, hundreds of unresolved "disappearances", unfair trials of political prisoners and a pattern of short-term detention and widespread torture.

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